

This letter was sent to
all the contacts listed in the
BISN Contacts address book as of 10/05/06.

Hello Everyone!

I made a promise to inform you about the immigration conference held in Fort Worth on September 23rd in case you really wanted to attend but couldn't go. So, please look at the following report.

2nd ANNUAL IMMIGRATION CONFERENCE
INFORMANDO A NUESTRA COMUNIDAD EN TEMAS DE
INMIGRACION Y EDUCACION
FORT WORTH, SEPTEMBER 23, 2006

This conference was sponsored by Proyecto Inmigrante ICS, Inc, Tarrant County College District, Univision local channel 23 KUVN, two radio stations, 94.1 FM and 1270 AM and Panorama News. There were also others who took part in putting the conference together and who were acknowledged in the program.

All of the sessions were led by familiar figures in immigration law and the topics concerned various immigration cases such as Citizenship, Deportation, VAWA, Asylum, etc. This conference is useful for showing more training if one is trying to secure accreditation from BIA. The sessions were featured in the morning and after lunch.

The consul from El Salvador, Lic. Mario Roger Hernández presented during the lunch hour a very informative Power Point lecture regarding Immigration vs Economic Impact. I am trying to get a copy for our use/library.

A community fair was available throughout the morning and the lunch hour. There was information about social services, tax courses/tax information/help through HR Block, city services, United Way, county housing authority, and many more. This was excellent because the information was grouped in one place for the people's convenience; tables for selling wares were grouped elsewhere. Tarrant County College District reps were available to answer questions about the possibility for higher education for high school graduates.

The last event was a panel of consuls who answered questions from citizens of their countries.

Registration forms were given out at the door as people came in that morning, and attendees were requested to fill them out and turn them in to the registration desk. Tarrant College would mail certificates showing that people had received credit hours for having

attended. This was a very good idea as the certificates could be used later as proof of community interest and participation.

Throughout the sessions people were allowed to ask questions about their particular cases. This is not usually encouraged, as my experience has been that people are generally cut off and told to make an appointment. So this was unusual but very effective to create good will for any future events.

I give this conference a high grade and would criticize only the late start if it weren't for the fact that the weather was bad, and many people came in late.

MOVING ON: There will be some training available on November 15th through the 17th in Tucson, Arizona. It is the National Legalization, Detention and Religious Immigration Capacity-Building Conference. Here's a contact name in case you have a question.

Vanna Slaughter at Catholic Charities, Dallas
214/634-7182, ext 228
vanna@ccicsdallas.org

You can also access the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) web site: www.cliniclegal.org for information on more training and conference dates and locations.

Finally, I would like to introduce Krista Gregory, who is now the Administrator and Consultant for Baptist Immigration Services Network (BISN). Krista returned to the United States after serving as a career missionary (field personnel) in Spain with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Among the many other things she accomplished while serving in Spain, her work included setting up an immigration center. She worked with Latino immigrants as well as with sub-Saharan Africans, Moroccans and Algerians. BISN is blessed for having found her (the Lord sent her to us). Krista speaks fluent Spanish, though with a heavy accent (like she says Dioth, theboja, you get the idea); however, I am working on that by teaching her Tex-Mex.

Some of Krista's accomplishments for BISN since she joined us are:

- Revision of the Guide to Recognition and Accreditation to reflect appropriate BIA language and to provide new resources for assistance to churches wishing to establish recognized immigration centers;

- Visits in September to four established BIA recognized Immigration Centers to learn best practices;
- Maintaining strong connections to local immigrant communities and needs through the Austin Immigrants' Rights Coalition;
- Attended three-day intensive workshop on Management of Immigration Centers taught by CLINIC;
- Will present biblical perspective on immigration ministry at Austin-based workshop on helping Spanish speaking victims of crime, at which time she
- Hopes to encourage participation from Hispanic and Anglo Baptist pastors in preparation for immigration reform;
- Attended and participated in the Borderlands Conference in Laredo with Pastor Mike Barrera and South Texas/border pastors and associations.

With the addition of Krista the BISN Team is complete. The next time I write to you I will introduce the third member of the Team. So, don't drop your subscription to the newsletter yet!

Lovingly, Hermana Carmelita

Carmelita M. Hernandez
Church Liaison and Consultant
Baptist Immigration Services Network
c/o Christian Life Commission
221 E. 9th Street, Suite 403
Austin TX 78701
Phone: 512/797-3786 (cell)
carmelitam01@earthlink.net